

Week Ending Friday, December 14, 2007

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Jewish Community Leaders**

December 10, 2007

I've just had an extraordinary meeting with Jewish men and women, many of whom are from different parts of the world, who are fortunate to call America home. And they do so because of our great tradition of religious freedom and religious tolerance.

We discussed how America must remain engaged in helping people realize the great blessings of religious freedom and where we find societies in which religious freedom is not allowed to practice, that we must do something about it.

I recognize today is International Human Rights Day. And a good way to celebrate this day is to invited people from our country and from around the world to share with me their stories, stories of courage and stories of people who simply want to be in a society where people are allowed to worship freely.

We discussed the world in which we live today. We all recognize that we're in an ideological struggle against people who murder the innocent in order to achieve political objectives, and that on the one hand, America must do everything to protect ourselves and are doing so. In the long term, the best way to defeat an ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. An ideology of hope is one that says, we value your religion; we honor the way you worship. And in our society, you can worship any way you so choose, and that's the vision and dream for societies around the world.

So I want to thank you for sharing your stories with me. I thank you for your courage. May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

**Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah
Menorah**

December 10, 2007

Thank you. Good evening. Laura and I welcome you to the White House. Mr. Attorney General, thank you for being here—Secretary Chertoff and family. Hanukkah is a time of joy and festivity in the Jewish religion. We're honored to gather with members of the Jewish community to celebrate this holiday.

During Hanukkah, we remember an ancient struggle for freedom. More than 2,000 years ago, a cruel tyrant ruled Judea and forbade the Israelites from practicing their religion. A band of brothers came together to fight this oppression, and against incredible odds, they liberated the capital city of Jerusalem. As they set about rededicating the Holy Temple, they witnessed a great miracle: that purified oil that was supposed to last for 1 day burned for 8.

Jewish families commemorate this miracle by lighting the menorah for the 8 nights of Hanukkah. The Talmud instructs families to place the menorah in public view so the entire world can see its light. The flames remind us that light triumphs over darkness, faith conquers despair, and the desire for freedom burns inside every man, woman, and child.

As we light the Hanukkah candles this year, we pray for those who still live under the shadow of tyranny. This afternoon I met with a group of Jewish immigrants to mark International Human Rights Day. Many of these men and women fled from religious oppression in countries like Iran and Syria and the Soviet Union. They came to America because our Nation is a beacon of freedom. And they see a day of hope on the horizon when people all across the world will worship in freedom. The forces of intolerance can suppress the menorah, but they can never extinguish its light.